

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-15. (canceled)

16. (Currently amended) A process for working up a bottom stream comprising one or more high boilers and ionic liquid salts which are liquid at temperatures below 200⁰ C from an extractive rectification in which the ionic liquid is used as entrainer, which comprises feeding the bottom stream to an evaporation stage which is operated at a pressure of less than 500 mbar and in which the major part of the high boiler present is separated off in vapor form from the ionic liquid so that the high boiler content of the ionic liquid is reduced to concentrations of less than 5% by weight and subsequently feeding the worked-up ionic liquid to a stripper which is supplied with inert gas or superheated steam and operating at a pressure of less than 900 mbar, wherein high boilers are discharged in vapor form via a side offtake on an extractive rectification column.

17. (Previously presented) A process for working up a bottom stream comprising one or more high boilers and ionic liquid salts which are liquid at temperatures below 200⁰ C from an extractive rectification in which the ionic liquid is used as entrainer, which comprises feeding the bottom stream to a stripper which is supplied with superheated steam comprising a low boiler and is operated at ambient pressure or at a pressure of less than 900 mbar.

18-21. (Canceled)

22. (Currently amended) ~~The process according to claim 15,~~ A process for working up a bottom stream comprising one or more high boilers and ionic liquid salts which are liquid at temperatures below 200⁰ C from an extractive rectification in which the ionic liquid is used as entrainer, which comprises feeding the bottom stream to an evaporation stage which is operated at a pressure of less than 500 mbar and in which the major part of the high boiler present is separated off in vapor form from the ionic liquid so that the high boiler content of the ionic liquid is reduced to concentrations of less than 5% by weight and

subsequently feeding the worked-up ionic liquid to a stripper which is supplied with inert gas or superheated steam and operating at ambient pressure, and wherein high boilers are discharged in vapor form via a side offtake on an extractive rectification column.

23. (Previously presented) The process according to claim 22, wherein the side offtake used for separating off the high boilers is positioned in a stripping section of the extractive column at the bottom.

24. (Currently amended) ~~The process according to claim 15,~~ A process for working up a bottom stream comprising one or more high boilers and ionic liquid salts which are liquid at temperatures below 200⁰ C from an extractive rectification in which the ionic liquid is used as entrainer, which comprises feeding the bottom stream to an evaporation stage which is operated at a pressure of less than 500 mbar and in which the major part of the high boiler present is separated off in vapor form from the ionic liquid so that the high boiler content of the ionic liquid is reduced to concentrations of less than 5% by weight and subsequently feeding the worked-up ionic liquid to a stripper which is supplied with inert gas or superheated steam and operating at ambient pressure, and wherein the worked-up ionic liquid is recirculated to an extractive rectification column.

25. (Currently amended) ~~The process according to claim 15,~~ A process for working up a bottom stream comprising one or more high boilers and ionic liquid salts which are liquid at temperatures below 200⁰ C from an extractive rectification in which the ionic liquid is used as entrainer, which comprises feeding the bottom stream to an evaporation stage which is operated at a pressure of less than 500 mbar and in which the major part of the high boiler present is separated off in vapor form from the ionic liquid so that the high boiler content of the ionic liquid is reduced to concentrations of less than 5% by weight and subsequently feeding the worked-up ionic liquid to a stripper which is supplied with inert gas or superheated steam and operating at ambient pressure, and

wherein, when an evaporator is used, a liquid ring pump is used for compressing the vapors to ambient pressure, with the liquid ring pump being operated using ionic liquid as ring liquid.

26. (Canceled)

27. (Previously presented) A process according to claim 23 wherein the side offtake is positioned at one of three bottom-most theoretical plates of the extractive column.

28. (Previously presented) A process according to claim 23 wherein the side offtake is positioned at a bottom-most theoretical plate of the extractive column.

29. (Canceled)

30. (New) A process for working up a bottom stream comprising one or more high boilers and ionic liquid salts which are liquid at temperatures below 200⁰ C from an extractive rectification in which the ionic liquid is used as entrainer, which comprises feeding the bottom stream to an evaporation stage which is operated at a pressure of less than 500 mbar and in which the major part of the high boiler present is separated off in vapor form from the ionic liquid so that the high boiler content of the ionic liquid is reduced to concentrations of less than 5% by weight and subsequently feeding the worked-up ionic liquid to a stripper which is supplied with inert gas or superheated steam and operating at a pressure of less than 900 mbar, and wherein the worked-up ionic liquid is recirculated to an extractive rectification column.

31. (New) The process according to claim 17, wherein high boilers are discharged in vapor form via a side offtake on an extractive rectification column.

32. (New) The process according to claim 17, wherein the worked-up ionic liquid is recirculated to an extractive rectification column.